

Travel Report Tucson 2022



In 2022, a group of Fire Observers went on a ride along and training program to Tucson, Arizona. The program took place from Sunday, September 11th, 2022 to Monday, September 26th, 2022 and was open for 8 participants and 2 supervisors. The group consisted of the following people:

Supervisors:

- Marc Opstal – Brandweerzone Vlaams Brabant West - post Zaventem
- Dirk Van den Berghe – Brandweerzone Centrum - post Merelbeke

Participants:

- Quinten Cornelis – Veiligheidsregio Zeeland – post Zuidland
- Bianca Henderick - Brandweerzone Centrum – post Wachtebeke
- Sammy Kneuvelds – Brandweerzone Fluvia – post Waregem
- Pascal Massee – Veiligheidsregio Noord Holland Noord – post Castricum
- Pieter-Jan Regheere – Brandweerzone Westhoek – post Zuid Ijzer
- Henry Scholte – Veiligheidsregio Groningen – post Niebert
- Vital Theys – Brandweerzone Midwest – post Lichtervelde
- Loren Verhallemans - Brandweerzone Midwest – post Lichtervelde

Before the start of the program, the various participants were divided among the fire stations of Tucson Fire.

Station assignments :

Station 1 [Pieter-jan Regheere](#)
Station 4 [Loren Verhallemans](#)
Station 5 [Bianca Henderick](#)
Station 9 [Henry Scholte](#)
Station 11 [Vital Theys](#)
Station 16 [Sammy Kneuvelds](#)
Station 17 [Dirk Van den Berghe](#)
Station 20 [Quinten Cornelis](#)
Station 21 [Marc Opstal](#)
Station 22 [Pascal Massee](#)

What follows is a travel diary of the different days of the program.

Sunday September 11th, 2022

This morning, the group set off towards Phoenix at the crack of dawn. After a short flight from Brussels to London, we're ready for a 12 hour flight to Phoenix. Expected arrival at 12:15 local time (9:15 PM).



After 17 hours of travel, we have finally arrived in Tucson. A little time for some refreshment at the hotel and a small snack, and we can end the day and look forward to our first day at the Tucson Fire department.



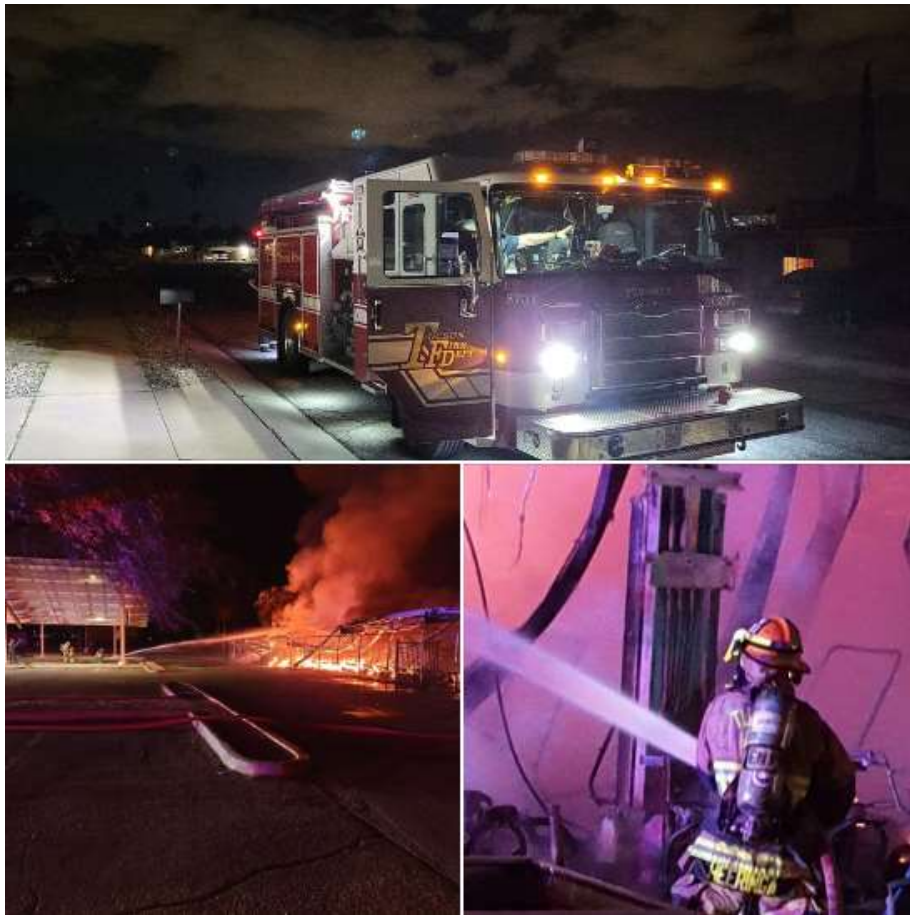
Monday September 12th, 2022

Today is the first day of our ride along program at Tucson Fire. We were welcomed at Station 1, also known as headquarters, where we met the mayor of Tucson and the deputy chiefs of Tucson Fire. Then it was time for a visit to the 911 dispatch and the logistics center of Tucson Fire with a tour and fitting of bunker gear and breathing apparatus that we will need for a live exercise taking place on Thursday. After these visits, it was time to take everyone to their respective stations for the first day and night at the fire department.



Tuesday and Wednesday September 13th and 14th, 2022

Today and tomorrow, the participants are spending a whole day at their respective fire stations. Everyone got their fair share of calls. Lots of medical calls and here and there some other interesting fire calls. In between, the crews have plenty to keep us busy.



Thursday September 15th, 2022

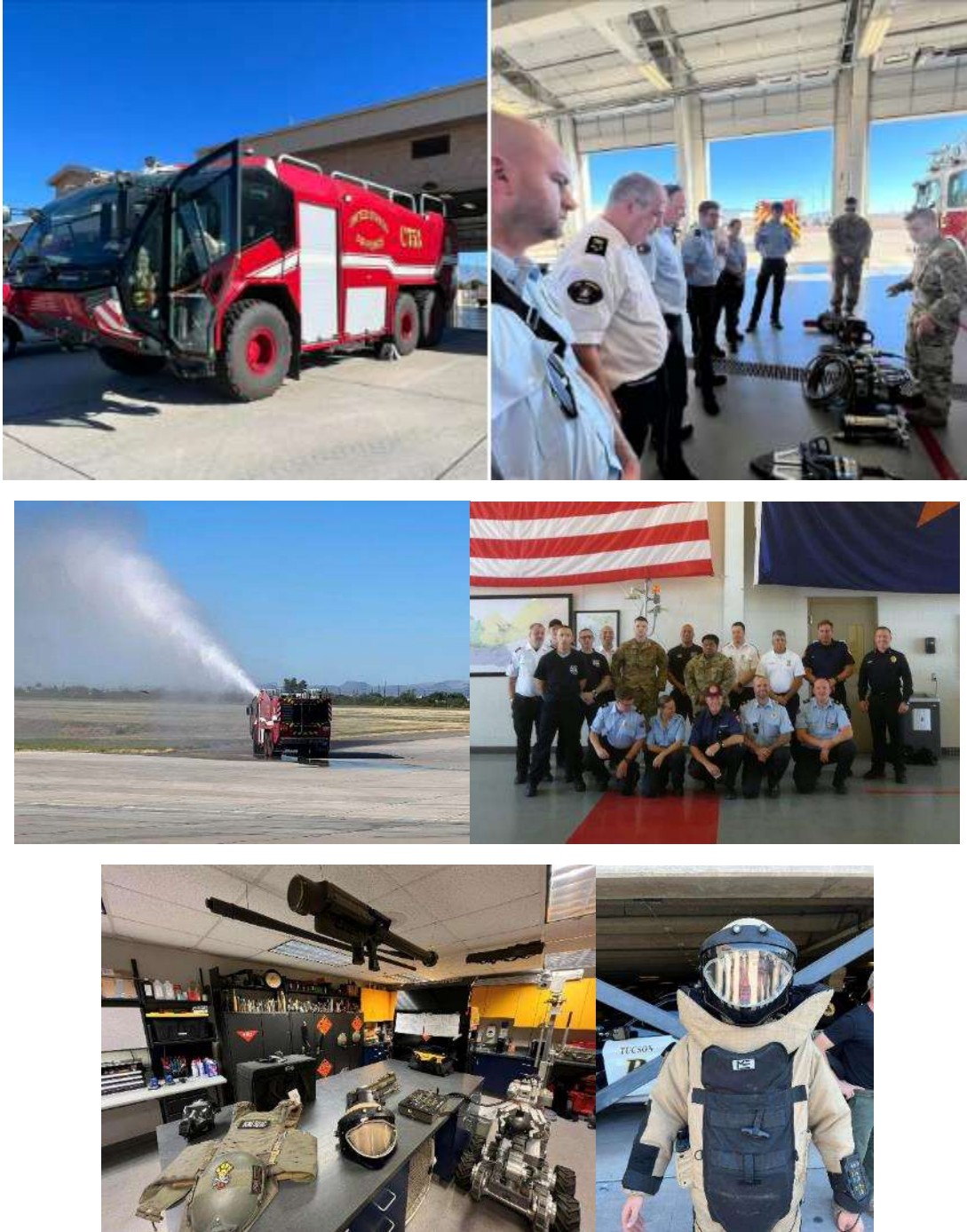
Today is training day. The group visited the Fire Academy where we received a theory lesson on flashover and deployment of transitional attack followed by a demo. The officers were given the opportunity to sit in on one of the promotion exams for the rank of captain (sergeant in our country). After lunch and a chat with the Fire Chief of Tucson Fire, it was time for flashover training in a container.





Friday September 17th, 2022

Today, a visit to the Davis Monthan Airforce base was on the agenda, where we received a tour of the fire department on the base. Then we were invited for a visit to the bomb squad and the SWAT team of Tucson PD.





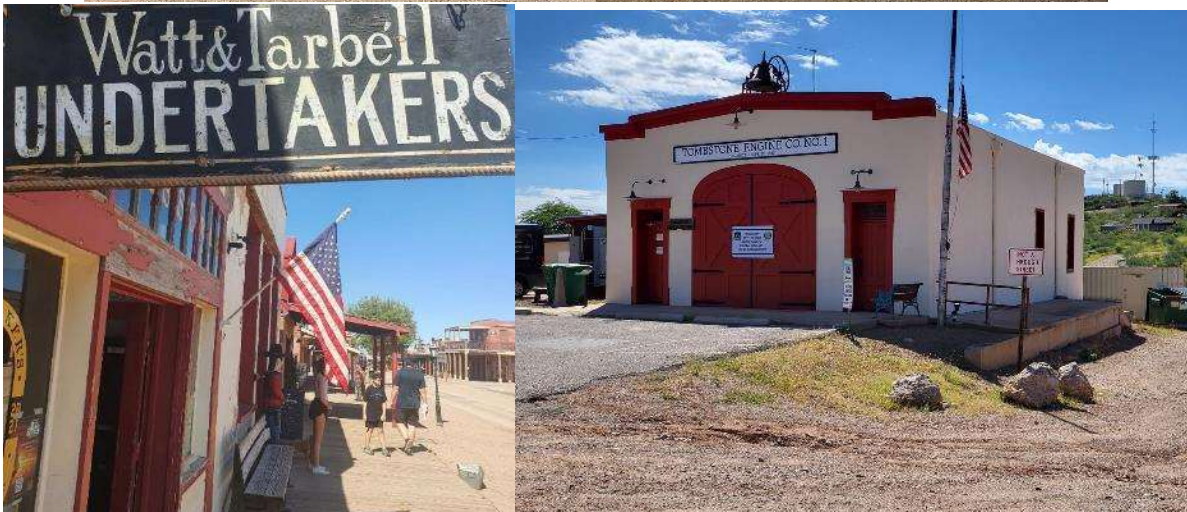
Saturday September 18th, 2022

After visiting the air force base yesterday, today it was time for a visit to the PIMA Air & Space Museum in Tucson.



Sunday September 18th, 2022.

Today, there were some tourist visits in and around Tucson on the program. The first stop of the day was the historic town of Tombstone. Then it was off to Saguaro National Park, known for its many landscapes with cacti. As the last stop, we drove to the top of Mount Lemmon to see the sunset from there.



Monday September 19th, 2022

Today marks the end of the firefighter training program. We'll start by picking up all the participants from their stations and gather at the headquarters to say goodbye to Tucson Fire. This also marks the start of the tourist part of the trip. Today's itinerary includes a 650 km drive from Tucson to the Grand Canyon. Our first stop is in Sedona, where we'll visit the Chapel of the Holy Cross. After a short lunch, we'll continue to the Grand Canyon National Park, where we'll stay until sunset. Afterwards, we'll grab a bite to eat in Tusayan before continuing on to our overnight stay in Flagstaff for a quiet first night.



Tuesday September 20th, 2022

Today's itinerary includes a 460 km drive. We will be traveling along Route 66, starting with a stop in Seligman, followed by stops in Kingman and Oatman. We will have lunch in one of the saloons in Oatman and then continue on to Las Vegas, with a stop at the Hoover Dam. We will arrive at our accommodation in Las Vegas in the late afternoon, staying on the strip at the Best Western Casino Royale hotel. On our first evening in Vegas, we will visit the old district of Fremont Street.



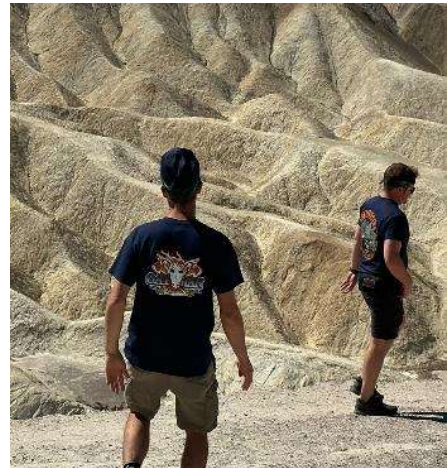
Wednesday September 21st, 2022

Vegas day! Today we stay in Las Vegas and have a free day. Those who wanted could join the guides to one of the outlet shopping malls.



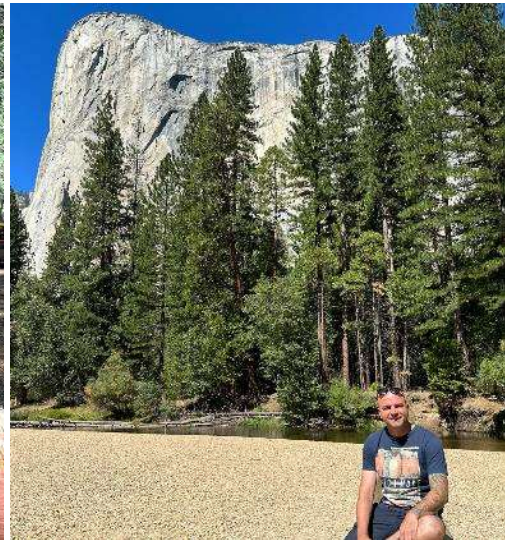
Thursday September 22nd, 2022

Today we are leaving Las Vegas and have a long drive ahead of us. We are driving to Bishop via Death Valley. However, there is a hitch as the passage through Death Valley is closed due to recent flooding. As a result, we cannot reach certain parts of Death Valley and will have to detour after our visit. During our detour, we will make a stop at the ghost town of Rhyolite. This was once a mining town that now lies abandoned.



Friday September 23rd, 2022

Today's drive takes us to Yosemite National Park. The weather is beautiful and we drive along Mono Lake to enter the park via the Tioga Pass. We stop for lunch near El Capitan where we light the barbecue for a delicious lunch. After lunch, we drive towards the western exit of the park where we first visit the Mariposa Grove of the Giant Sequoias. Then it's off to Fresno where we overnight.



Saturday September 24th, 2022

The final leg of our road trip is on the schedule today with a strenuous 610 km drive to San Francisco as our final destination. We drive from Fresno to Morro Bay on the coast. It is reasonably cloudy and cool upon arrival there. From there, we follow the iconic Pacific Highway towards Big Sur with stops in San Simeon, McWay Falls, and the Bixby Bridge. Then it's off to South San Francisco, where we arrive late in the evening.



Sunday September 25th, 2022

A small driving tour of San Francisco today. We visit places such as Twin Peaks, Alamo Square, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Then we head towards the harbor near Pier 39 where we stop for lunch before taking the ferry to Alcatraz.



Monday September 26th, 2022

On the final day of our trip, we conclude with a visit to Fire Station 20 of the San Francisco Fire Department. This brand-new fire station is built on a floating pontoon and is the home base of the Marine unit. We also take a tour with one of the fire boats. From here, we then head back to the hotel to pick up our luggage and then drive to the airport to drop off our rental cars and check in for our return flight to Brussels.



Tuesday September 27th, 2022

Arrival in Brussels and happy to see friends and family again.

